DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 324 558 CG 022 812

AUTHOR Steinberg, Laurence; And Others
TITLE Authoritative Parenting and Adolescent Adjustment across Varied Ecological Niches.
INSTITUTION National Center on Effective Secondary Schools, Madison, WI.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.; Spencer Foundation, Chicago, Ill.
PUB DATE Mar 90
CONTRACT G008690007
NOTE 34p.; Based in part on a paper presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development (Kansas City, MO, April 1989).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; *Adjustment (to Environment); *Adolescents; Cultural Differences; Delinquency; Discipline; *Ecological Factors; Family Characteristics; Family Structure; High Schools; High School Students; Parent Attitudes; *Parent Child Relationship; Socioeconomic Status; Stress Variables; Student Behavior
IDENTIFIERS *Authoritative Parenting; Parenting Style; *Self Reliance

ABSTRACT

This study examined whether the widely reported positive relation between "authoritative" parenting and adolescent adjustment is moderated by the ecological context in which adolescents live. A socioeconomically and ethnically diverse sample of approximately 10,000 high school students provided information about their parents' behavior and their family background and completed measures of four indicators of adjustment: school performance, self-reliance, psychological distress, and delinquency. The students were grouped into 16 ecological niches defined by ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and family structure, and analyses were conducted within each niche to contrast the adjustment scores of adolescents from authoritative versus nonauthoritative homes. Analyses indicated that the positive correlates of authoritative parenting transcended ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and family structure. Virtually regardless of their ethnicity, class, or parents' marital status, adolescents whose parents were accepting, firm, and democratic earned higher grades in school, were more self-reliant, reported less anxiety and depression, and were less likely to engage in delinquent behavior. (Author)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

CG

FINAL DELIVERABLE

March 1990

Authoritative Parenting and Adolescent Adjustment Across Varied Ecological Niches

ED324558

Laurence Steinberg

Temple University

Nina S. Mounts and Susie D. Lamborn

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Sanford M. Dornbusch

Stanford University

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

F.M. Newman

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

RUNNING HEAD: AUTHORITATIVE PARENTING AND ADOLESCENT ADJUSTMENT

Based in part on a paper presented at the biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Kansas City, MO, April, 1989. The research was supported by a grant to Laurence Steinberg and B. Bradford Brown from the U.S. Department of Education, through the National Center on Effective Secondary Schools at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and from the Spencer Foundation, to Sanford Dornbusch and P. Herbert Leiderman of the Stanford University Center for Families, Children, and Youth. We are exceedingly grateful to Diana Baumrind and Urie Bronfenbrenner for their comments on an earlier draft of this paper and to Ralph Rosnow for his suggestions concerning the plan of analysis. Address correspondence to the first author, Department of Psychology, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA 19122.

CG022812

Abstract

This study examines whether the widely reported positive relation between "authoritative" parenting and adolescent adjustment is moderated by the ecological context in which adolescents live. A socioeconomically and ethnically diverse sample of approximately 10,000 high school students provided information about their parents' behavior and their family background and completed measures of four indicators of adjustment: school performance, self-reliance, psychological distress, and delinquency. The students were grouped into 16 ecological niches defined by ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and family structure, and analyses were conducted within each niche to contrast the adjustment scores of adolescents from authoritative versus nonauthoritative homes. Analyses indicate that the positive correlates of authoritative parenting transcend ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and family structure. Virtually regardless of their ethnicity, class, or parents' marital status, adolescents whose parents are accepting, firm, and democratic earn higher grades in school, are more self-reliant, report less anxiety and depression, and are less likely to engage in delinquent behavior.

The present study extends previous work on the relation between authoritative parenting and adolescent development and behavior (Dornbusch et al., 1987; Steinberg, Elmen, & Mounts, 1989). Authoritative parenting, initially described by Baumrind (1971; 1973; 1978), is characterized by high levels of responsiveness and high levels of demandingness. According to several comprehensive reviews, authoritative parenting, as opposed to permissive (high in responsiveness, but low in demandingness) or authoritarian (high in demandingness, but low in responsiveness) parenting, is associated with the development of competence in children and adolescents, virtually however indexed (Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Steinberg, in press). As these reviews have pointed out, however, nearly all research on authoritative parenting and its benefits has focused on white, middle-class families, and it is not known whether these same parenting practices are equally advantageous among other groups of youngsters. In this study we examine whether the ecological context in which adolescents live -- defined by their ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and family structure -- moderates the relation between parental authoritativeness and adolescent behavior and adjustment.

The theoretical impetus for the present study comes mainly from the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979; 1986; 1989; Bronfenbrenner and Crouter, 1983), who has suggested that researchers pay more attention to "process-by-context interactions" -- the ways in which developmental processes vary as a function of the broader

context in which they occur. Although psychologists interested in socialization have paid a good deal of attention to intrafamilial processes and their effects on children's development, and sociologists interested in families have studied contextual differences in children's development and well-being, studies that look simultaneously at process and context are quite rare. Indeed, in most studies of socialization processes, contextual factors, such as socioeconomic status or ethnicity, are treated as "nuisance" variables: sources of error which are held constant through selective sampling (typically, the selected group is white and middle-class) or statistical control. These studies may tell us how various socialization techniques contribute to the child's development above and beyond the contribution of demographic factors, but they do not reveal whether the processes that are important in one context are equally so in others.

There is good reason to believe that the effects of specific parenting practices on children's development may in fact be moderated by the larger context in which a child lives. In particular, one would hypothesize that the specific socialization techniques associated with healthy child development are those that are most consistent with the values and demands of broader environment in which the family lives. From this perspective, authoritative parenting, with its decidedly middle-class emphasis on democratic parent-child communication and the encouragement of autonomy (see Kohn, 1977) should most benefit children from

mainstream, middle-class homes, while its positive effects may be less obvious for children from other demographic groups. Conversely, although it is widely held that authoritarian parenting, with its emphasis on obedience to authority, has deleterious consequences for the child (Maccoby & Martin, 1983), one might hypothesize that this style of parenting may have fewer costs, and perhaps some benefits, among minority and poor children (see Baumrind, 1972; Baldwin & Baldwin, 1989). Poor and minority youngsters are more likely to live in relatively more dangerous environments than their white, middle-class peers, and they may benefit from levels of parental control that would appear excessively strict in other environments.

The Dornbusch et al. (1987) study referenced earlier provides some support for the contention that authoritative parenting may be more effective in white households than in others, at least in the prediction of adolescents' school performance. The research examined adolescent school achievement and three indices of parenting practices -- authoritative parenting, authoritarian parenting, and permissive parenting -- in a sample of 8,000 students separated into four major ethnic groups: African-American, Anglo-American, Asian-American, and Hispanic-American. Across the sample as a whole, as hypothesized, parental authoritativeness was associated with higher grades, and parental authoritarianism and permissiveness were associated with lower grades. When the sample was disaggregated into ethnic groups, however, the index of

authoritativeness was significantly predictive of achievement only among Anglo-American adolescents; the index was marginally predictive among Hispanic-American adolescents and not at all predictive in the Asian-American or African-American subsamples. The index of permissiveness was inversely related to grades among Anglo-American students, but unrelated to grades in the other groups. And the index of authoritarianism was negatively predictive of grades among Anglo-American and Asian-American students, but not among African-American or Hispanic-American youngsters.[1] The analyses controlled for the effects of socioeconomic status (indexed via parental education levels) and family structure.

By the end of this decade, nearly one-third of all adolescents in the United States will be from African-American, Asian-American, or Hispanic-American families (Wetzel, 1987). In light of the changed and changing demography of youth, researchers can no longer afford to study socialization processes and outcomes solely within Anglo-American samples. Yet, despite an extensive literature documenting variations in parenting behaviors across cultural groups (Whiting & Whiting, 1975), the Dornbusch et al. (1987) study is, as far as we can determine, the only attempt to date to look systematically at the way in which ethnicity moderates the effects of specific parenting practices on adolescent development (see Spencer & Dornbusch, in press).

The broader context in which a youngster lives is defined only in part by his or her ethnicity, of course. Within ethnic

groups there are substantial variations in both family structure and socioeconomic status, each of which has been shown to affect parenting practices (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1958; Dornbusch et al., 1985; Hess & Shipman, 1967; Hetherington, 1979; Kohn, 1977). Because the Dornbusch et al. (1987) study used parental education and family structure as covariates, it did not permit an analysis of the moderating effects of these variables, either separately or in conjunction with ethnicity. In addition to our interest in further examining the moderating impact of ethnicity on socialization outcomes, we sought in this study to look at the parallel effects of socioeconomic status and family structure.

Our operationalization of authoritativeness is based on three dimensions of parenting: acceptance/involvement, firm control, and psychological autonomy. In a previous study of a sample of white, middle- and working-class adolescents, Steinberg et al. (1989) demonstrated that scores on each of these three dimensions were significantly predictive of adolescent school performance. Given the apparent utility of this model in predicting academic achievement among "mainstream" adolescents, these dimensions seemed to be an appropriate place to begin the more ecologically sensitive analyses of the present study.

In the present investigation, three demographic characteristics -- ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and family structure -- were used to define a series of 16 ecological "niches". Rather than control for these demographic variables, we conducted separate analyses <u>within</u> each ecological niche in

order to examine whether the relation between authoritative parenting and adolescent development is comparable across groups. In order to extend this inquiry beyond the prediction of school performance, we examine the relation between parental authoritativeness and adolescent adjustment within four conceptually distinct domains of adolescent functioning: school performance, psychosocial maturity, psychological distress, and behavior problems (see Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1989). We predicted that the relation between authoritative parenting and these indices of adjustment would be strongest for adolescents from white, middle-class, intact families and weaker for adolescents growing up in different social ecologies.

Method

Sample

The data for the present report come from two self-report questionnaires administered to approximately 10,000 ninth- through twelfth-grade students attending one of nine high schools in Wisconsin and California. The schools were selected to produce a diverse sample in terms of ethnicity, family structure, socioeconomic status, and type of community (rural, suburban, and urban). In the sample, 9 percent of the students are black, 14 percent are Asian, 12 percent are Hispanic, and 60 percent are white (the remainder belong to a different ethnic group). All of the students in attendance on the day of testing were asked to complete the questionnaires, and completed questionnaires were obtained each time from approximately 80% of the sample.

Measures

Of interest in the present analyses are the demographic variables used to assign youngsters to the various ecological niches, the three parenting dimensions used to operationalize authoritative parenting, and our indices of adolescent adjustment.

Demographic variables. Students provided information on their parents' educational attainment, on their ethnic identification, and on their current family structure. Socioeconomic status was operationalized in terms of the mean education level of the adults with whom the adolescent resided, and coded into two categories: working-class (less than college completion) and middle-class (college completion or higher). Students provided information on their current family structure, which was used to group individuals into two categories: two-parent biologically-intact, and nonintact (primarily, adolescents living with a single mother or in a stepfamily).[2] Students also provided information on their ethnicity, which was used to categorize individuals into one of four major ethnic groups (African-American, Anglo-American, Asian-American, and Hispanic-American).[3] Ecological niches were formed by creating a 2 (socioeconomic status) x 2 (family structure) x 4 (ethnicity) matrix and assigning students to one of the resulting 16 cells.

Authoritative parenting. The questionnaires contained many items on parenting practices that were taken or adapted from existing measures (e.g., Dornbusch et al., 1985; Patterson &

Stouthamer-Loeber, 1985; Rodgers, 1966) or developed for the program of work. Based on the previous work of Steinberg et al. (1989), a number of items were selected to correspond with the three dimensions of authoritative parenting identified earlier, and these were subjected to exploratory factor analyses using an oblique rotation. Three factors emerged, corresponding to the dimensions of acceptance/involvement, firm control, and psychological autonomy. These factors are identitical to those suggested in the earlier work of Schaefer (1965) and parallel, respectively, the Supportive Control, Assertive Control, and Directive/Conventional Control scales employed by Baumrind (in press) in her ongoing study of socialization and adolescent competence. Factor analyses were repeated separately for the four ethnic groups, and the basic structure was identical.

The acceptance/involvement scale measures the extent to which the adolescent perceives his or parents as loving, responsive, and involved (sample item: "I can count on [them] to help me out if I have some kind of problem"; 15 items, alpha=.72). The firm control scale assesses parental monitoring and limit-setting (sample item: "How much do your parents try to know where you go at night?"; 9 items, alpha=.76). The psychological autonomy scale assesses the extent to which parents employ noncoercive, democratic discipline and encourage the adolescent to express individuality within the family (sample item, reversed scored: "How often do your parents tell you that their ideas are correct and that you should not question them"?;

12 items, alpha=.72). Composite scores were calculated on each of these dimensions. Correlations among the dimensions suggest that they are related but conceptually distinct aspects of parenting: (acceptance with firm control, r=.34; acceptance with psychological autonomy, r=.25; firm control with psychological autonomy, r=-.07). Reliability coefficients for the three dimensions were also calculated within each ecological group; the alpha coefficients are satisfactory across the 16 groups (See Table 1).

Based on previous work and the theoretical model of authoritative parenting tested in this study, "authoritative" families were defined as those scoring above the sample median on acceptance/involvement, firm control, and psychological autonomy. Any family scoring below the sample median on <u>any</u> of the three dimensions was classified as "nonauthoritative".[4] The percentages of authoritative families, so defined, across the 16 ecological groups, is presented in Table 1. In general (and consistent with previous research), authoritativeness is more common among middle-class than among working-class families; more common among Anglo-American than among minority families; and more common among intact than among nonintact families. The highest proportion of authoritative families (25%) is found in the Anglo-American, intact, middle-class group, whereas the lowest (6%) is found in the Asian-American, nonintact, working-class group.

Table 1 About Here

Adolescent adjustment. Four dependent variables were selected based on previous work linking these aspects of adolescent adjustment to authoritative parenting in Anglo-American, middle-class, intact two-parent households (see Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Steinberg, in press). Our index of school performance was students' self-reported grade-point-average (GPA), scored on a four-point-scale. Dornbusch et al. (1987) have reported a correlation of .75 between self-reported grades and actual grades taken from official school records. We indexed psychosocial maturity via the self-reliance subscale of the Psychosocial Maturity Inventory (Form D; Greenberger, Josselson, Knerr, & Knerr, 1974; Greenberger & Bond, 1986; alpha=.81). Our index of psychological distress comes from a series of items from the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D; Radloff, 1977), which were used to form an index of psychological distress (anxiety, depression, tension, fatigue, insomnia, etc.) (alpha=.88). To examine behavior problems, adolescents' reports on their frequency of involvement in such delinquent activities as theft, carrying a weapon, vandalism, and using a phony I.D. were used to form an index of delinquency, alpha=.82) (Gold, 1980).

Means and standard deviations for four outcome variables are presented separately for each of the sixteen ecological niches in

Table 2.

Table 2 About Here

Plan of Analysis

In order to examine the relation between authoritative parenting and the outcome measures of interest, a series of planned t-tests were conducted within each ecological niche. In each contrast, the scores of adolescents from authoritative households were compared with the scores of adolescents from nonauthoritative households. In addition, an estimation of the effect size (r) for each contrast was computed, following Rosnow and Rosenthal (1988). Because the sample size varies considerably across ecological groups (and, consequently, the power to discern differences between adolescents from authoritative and nonauthoritative families varies as well), examining effect sizes in addition to the significance levels of the various contrasts provides a more complete picture of the extent to which authoritative parenting is advantageous in different family ecologies.

Results

The results of the 64 contrasts (4 outcome variables across 16 ecological groups) are presented in Table 3. Forty of the 64 contrasts are statististically significant, each favoring adolescents from authoritative homes. Compared with their counterparts from nonauthoritative homes, authoritatively-reared

adolescents earn higher grades in school, are more self-reliant, report less psychological distress, and are less involved in delinquent activity. Of the 24 contrasts not reaching significance, all but three are in the expected direction. Most of the effects in Table 3 are between r=.1 and r=.2 -- what most experts would consider to be "small" effects (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1984).

Are the benefits of authoritative parenting greater in white, middle-class, intact households? Table 3 suggests that this question is difficult to answer. Significant differences between youngsters from authoritative and nonauthoritative homes are most consistently observed among Anglo-American youngsters, middle-class youngsters, and youngsters from intact households, as hypothesized. An inspection of magnitude of the effect sizes, however, indicates that this pattern of differential significance may be due mainly to differences in our ability to detect comparable effects in subsamples of different sizes. (For example, we have three times the power to detect an effect of .20 in the subsample of Anglo-American, middle-class youngsters from intact homes (with an approximate N of 2,600) than we do to detect an effect of the same size within the subsample of African-American, working-class youngsters from nonintact homes (with an approximate N of 200) [see Cohen, 1977, pp. 92-93]). We are especially hampered by the fact that in this case the effect we are trying to detect is quite small, because the detection of small effects requires relatively more statistical power.

Indeed, three of the groups in which it appears at first glance that authoritativeness is not especially advantageous (African-American, working-class, intact; Asian-American, working-class, nonintact; and Asian-American, middle-class, nonintact) have subsamples in the present study whose size may preclude the detection of the effect we are attempting to detect.

In order to examine this issue further, we carried out post-hoc analyses of the heterogeneity of effect sizes across the ecological niches (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1984). These analyses indicate that the effect sizes are homogeneous for self-reliance, psychological distress, and delinquency (for all three χ^2s, $p>.10$), but not for grade-point-average ($\chi^2(15)=28.76$, $p<.01$). Further post-hoc contrasts indicate that this heterogeneity in the case of grade-point-average is due to the moderating effect of ethnicity: The effect of parental authoritativeness on grade-point-average is greater among Anglo-American adolescents than among African-American or Asian-American adolescents ($z=1.88$, $p<.05$ and $z=2.59$, $p<.005$).

Table 3 About Here

Discussion

The results of the present study provide evidence that the widely reported positive correlation between parental authoritativeness and adolescent adjustment appears to transcend ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and family structure. Virtually

regardless of their family background, adolescents whose parents are warm, firm, and democratic enjoy psychological and behavioral advantages over their peers. Compared to their nonauthoritatively-reared counterparts, adolescents from authoritative homes generally do better in school, are more self-reliant, report less psychological distress, and engage in less delinquent activity. Although further research is obviously needed, the notion that parental authoritativeness is linked with healthy adolescent development may have what Weisz (1978) has called "transcontextual validity" -- at least within the contemporary United States.

Although one of the strengths of this study is its large and heterogeneous sample, the conclusions one can draw from the research are limited by its cross-sectional design and reliance on self-report data. Because the data are cross-sectional, it is impossible to say with any certainty that the parenting practices examined have in fact caused or even preceded the outcomes assessed. It could well be the case, for example, that well-adjusted adolescents elicit authoritativeness from their parents, or that less well-adjusted youth provoke parental neglect or hostility (see Lewis, 1981). Although reverse causality can not be ruled out, other research employing similar measures has indicated that parental authoritativeness actually promotes competence among white, middle- and working-class young people (Steinberg et al., 1989). The correlational findings reported in this study indicate that longitudinal work on other populations

is indeed warranted.

Our reliance on self-report data is also a limiting factor. Because the data all derive from youngsters' reports, we can only say that youngsters who characterize their parents in certain ways show particular patterns of behavior and psychological functioning. What this may indicate is that youngsters' subjective experience of parental behavior is an important influence on their own development and well-being. It is important to know, for methodological as well as theoretical reasons, whether parents' actual behavior toward their children is associated in similar ways with the outcomes assessed, and whether the association between parents' behavior and children's reports of parents' behavior varies as a function of ethnicity, class, or family structure.

Although we acknowledge the important contribution that observational work on families has made to the study of adolescent development, we do not subscribe to the view that objective (i.e., independent) assessments of parenting behavior are the only valid indicators of what takes place in the family (see also Jessor & Jessor, 1977, for a similar argument). Indeed, one might very reasonably argue that if a child experiences his parents as authoritative (regardless of how parents may characterize themselves, or how they may appear to outside observers), then this is what they in fact are, at least as far as the child's psychological development is concerned. Ultimately, one can only say that subjective and objective

assessments of parental behavior each provide an important window on the child's experience in the family, and that no one approach to the study of socialization is inherently superior to the other.

The comparability of our results to findings reported by investigators using observational measures of parenting (e.g., Baumrind, in press) lends additional support to the contention that the self-report data used in this study have not resulted in unusual biases in the findings. Among other advantages, self-report measures enable investigators to include substantially larger samples in their research than is typically the case in observational studies, and, as we discuss below, larger samples permit the detection of theoretically important findings that may go unnoticed in smaller-scale research.

Our findings indicate that the effects of authoritativeness, while statistically significant, are small in magnitude -- at least according to statistical convention. Before dismissing these effects as too small to be of practical significance, however, a number of considerations must be raised. First, the hypothesis that adolescents raised in authoritative homes would score higher than their peers on the measures of adjustment was tested in an exceedingly conservative manner, since all families who did not meet the criteria for the authoritative classification were grouped together in the "nonauthoritative" group. This heterogeneous group contained families who scored above the sample median on two of the three parenting dimensions,

for example, and who therefore may be considered relatively well-functioning. Had we contrasted adolescents raised in authoritative homes with their counterparts from families scoring below the median on all three dimensions (or two of the three dimensions), the observed effect sizes would likely have been larger.

Second, whether we consider the observed effects -- however modest -- to be of practical significance is, after all, a subjective matter. One way to gauge their real-world significance is to generate a Binomial Effect Size Display (BESD) (Rosenthal & Rubin, 1982). This procedure allows one to better estimate whether an observed difference between two groups is likely to have real-world significance.

In the case of grade-point-average, for example, suppose we assume that a cut-off is used by educational practitioners to distinguish between students whose grades are "adequate" versus "inadequate". (In practice, such a threshold might be used to make decisions about a student's track placement, or about whether a given student is admissable to a given university.) Knowing the effect size (r) permits us to estimate the percentage of students in each of the groups we are interested in (e.g., those from authoritative homes versus those from nonauthoritative homes) falling above or below an established threshold.[5] In the case of Anglo-American, middle-class youngsters from intact homes, the BESD indicates that 61% of youngsters from authoritative homes, but only 39% of youngsters from

nonauthoritative homes, would be expected to exceed an established cut-off. In contrast, in the case of Asian-American middle-class youngsters from nonintact homes the percentages of adolescents above the cut-off from authoritative versus nonauthoritative homes are virtually identical (52% versus 48%). Parallel computations can be made in order to estimate the practical significance of the effect sizes observed in the analyses of self-reliance (where a cut-off might determine which youngsters were selected for a job opportunity), psychological distress (where a cut-off might be used to determine which adolescents were referred for treatment), and delinquency (where a cut-off might determine how an adolescent was treated within the juvenile justice system).

Beyond these practical considerations, however, the consistently small effect sizes reported here suggest important methodological implications. Unfortunately, the news is not good for researchers interested in contrasting socialization consequences across demographic groups, since the analyses indicate that relatively large samples may be needed to uncover what appear to be fairly modest, albeit consistent, effects. Future research on parenting practices and adolescent outcomes should anticipate this problem and select sample sizes accordingly.

Thus far, our discussion has focused on the transcontextual validity of authoritative parenting as a predictor of adolescent adjustment. We must note, however, that the relation between

authoritativeness and school performance is greater among Anglo-American and Hispanic-American adolescents than among their African-American or Asian-American peers. This finding replicates the Dornbusch et al. (1987) study, in which the relation between authoritative parenting and students' grades was less consistent among African-American and Asian-American adolescents than among others. We do not know whether other models of parenting would be more predictive of school performance in these samples than was the model tested here. In the present study, however, this differential pattern did not emerge in the prediction of the other outcome variables (i.e., authoritatively-reared African-American and Asian-American adolescents appear to enjoy advantages in the domains of psychosocial maturity, psychological distress, and behavior problems), which suggests that the diminished predictive significance of parental authoritativeness among African-American and Asian-American youngsters may be limited to the domain of school performance. Further research, employing other outcomes in the cognitive and achievement domains, is needed.

Footnotes

1. Authoritarianism was negatively related to grades among Hispanic-American females, but not among Hispanic-American males.

2. Unfortunately, it was not possible to look at single-parent homes and stepfamilies separately, because of small cell sizes within certain ethnic/socioeconomic groups. Given previous findings suggesting that the psychological functioning of adolescents from single-parent homes is similar to that of adolescents from stepfamilies, with both groups differing from adolescents from two-parent, intact households (Furstenberg, in press), we grouped all adolescents from nonintact homes together for purposes of this paper.

3. There were insufficient numbers of students in the American Indian, Middle Eastern, and Pacific Islander groups to conduct analyses; these students were dropped form the sample in the present investigation.

4. This paper specifically examines differences between authoritative and nonauthoritative homes. We recognize that the nonauthoritative group includes a variety of family types, including authoritarian, indulgent, and neglectful families.

5. Adding one-half of the effect size coefficient to .50 gives us the percentage of the higher-scoring group who would be expected to exceed the threshold; subtracting one-half of the coefficient from .50 estimates the percentage of the lower-scoring group who would be expected to exceed the threshold.

References

Baldwin, C., & Baldwin, A. (1989, April). The role of family interaction in the prediction of adolescent competence. Symposium presented at the meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Kansas City, MO.

Baumrind, D. (1967). Child care practices anteceding three patterns of preschool behavior. Genetic Psychology Monographs, 75, 43-88.

Baumrind, D. (1971). Current patterns of parental authority. Developmental Psychology Monographs, 4 (1), part 2.

Baumrind, D. (1972). An exploratory study of socialization effects on black children: Some black-white comparisons. Child Development, 43, 261-267.

Baumrind, D. (1973). The development of instrumental competence through socialization. In A. Pick (Ed.), Minnesota symposium on child psychology (Vol. 7, pp. 3-46).

Baumrind, D. (1978). Parental disciplinary patterns and social competence inchildren. Youth and Society, 9, 239-276.

Baumrind, D. (in press). Parenting styles and adolescent development. In J. Brooks-Gunn, R. Lerner, and A.C. Petersen (Eds.), The encyclopedia of adolescence. New York: Garland.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1958). Socialization and social class through time and space. In E. Maccoby, T. Newcomb, and E. Hartley (Eds.), Readings in social psychology, New York: Holt, 1958.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). The ecology of human development:

Experiments by nature and design. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1986). Ecology of the family as a context for human development: Research perspectives. Developmental Psychology, 22, 723-742.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1989). Ecological systems theory. Annals of Child Development, 6, 187-249.

Bronfenbrenner, U., and Crouter, A.C. (1983). The evolution of environmental models in developmental research. In P.H. Mussen (Ed.), Handbook of child psychology: Vol. I. History, theory and methods. (W. Kessen, Volume Editor) (pp. 357-414). New York: Wiley.

Cohen, J. (1977). Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences. New York: Academic Press.

Dornbusch, S., Carlsmith, J., Bushwall, S., Ritter, P., Leiderman, H., Hastorf, A., and Gross, R. (1985). Single parents, extended households and the control of adolescents. Child Development, 56, 326-341.

Dornbusch, S., Ritter, P., Liederman, P., Roberts, D., and Fraleigh, M. (1987). The relation of parenting style to adolescent school performance. Child Development, 58, 1244-1257.

Furstenberg, F., Jr. (in press). Coming of age in a changing family system. In S. Feldman and G. Elliot (Eds.), At the threshold: The developing adolescent. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Hess, R., and Shipman, V. (1967). Cognitive elements in maternal behavior. Minnesota Symposium on Child Pyschology, 1, 57-81.

Hetherington, E.M., (1979). Divorce: A child's perspective. American Psychologist, 34, 851-858.

Kohn, M. (1977). Class and conformity (2nd. ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Maccoby, E., and Martin, J. (1983). Socialization in the context of the family: Parent-child interaction. In E.M. Hetherington (Ed.), P.H. Mussen (Series Ed.), Handbook of child psychology: Vol. 4. Socialization, personality, and social development (pp. 1-101). New York: Wiley.

Patterson, G., and Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1984). The correlation of family management practices and delinquency. Child Development, 55, 1299-1307.

Rodgers, R.R. (1966). Cornell Parent Behavior Description--An Interim Report. Unpublished manuscript, Department of Human Development and Family Studies, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.

Rosenthal, R., and Rosnow, R. (1984). Essentials of behavioral research: Methods and data analysis. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Rosenthal, R., and Rubin, D. (1982). A simple general purpose display of magnitude of experimental effect. Journal of Educational Psychology, 74, 166-169.

Spencer, M., and Dornbusch, S. (in press). Ethnicity and adolescence. In S. Feldman and G. Elliot (Eds.), At the

threshold: The developing adolescent. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Steinberg, L. (in press). Interdependency in the family: Autonomy, conflict, and harmony. In S. Feldman and G. Elliot (Eds.), At the threshold: The developing adolescent. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Steinberg, L., Elmen, J.D., and Mounts, N.S. (1989). Authoritative parenting, psychosocial maturity, and academic success among adolescents. Child Development, 60, 1424-1436.

Weisz, J. (1978). Transcontextual validity in developmental research. Child Development, 49, 1-12.

Wetzel, J. (1987). American youth: A statistical snapshot. New York: William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship.

Whiting, B., and Whiting, J. (1975). Children of six cultures: A psycho-cultural analysis. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Table 1

Sample Sizes, Percent Authoritative Families, and Internal Consistency of Parenting Dimensions within Ecological Niches

Ecological Niche	N	Percent Authoritative	Internal Consistency of Dimension		
			Acceptance	Control	Autonomy
WHITE, WORKING-CLASS, INTACT	559	17.2	.69	.76	.71
WHITE, WORKING-CLASS, NONINTACT	436	11.5	.68	.78	.69
WHITE, MIDDLE-CLASS, INTACT	2609	25.0	.71	.74	.74
WHITE, MIDDLE-CLASS, NONINTACT	1267	17.6	.72	.78	.73
BLACK, WORKING-CLASS, INTACT	82	13.4	.75	.61	.65
BLACK, WORKING-CLASS, NONINTACT	205	12.2	.71	.77	.60
BLACK, MIDDLE-CLASS, INTACT	178	14.1	.74	.75	.62
BLACK, MIDDLE-CLASS, NONINTACT	313	16.0	.71	.78	.62
HISPANIC, WORKING-CLASS, INTACT	336	10.7	.67	.76	.72
HISPANIC, WORKING-CLASS, NONINTACT	254	9.8	.68	.82	.71
HISPANIC, MIDDLE-CLASS, INTACT	202	15.8	.64	.74	.64
HISPANIC, MIDDLE-CLASS, NONINTACT	171	12.9	.63	.73	.62
ASIAN, WORKING-CLASS, INTACT	159	7.5	.78	.70	.66
ASIAN, WORKING-CLASS, NONINTACT	66	6.1	.55	.67	.66
ASIAN, MIDDLE-CLASS, INTACT	597	15.6	.73	.77	.71
ASIAN, MIDDLE-CLASS, NONINTACT	166	10.8	.70	.75	.73

Table 2

Mean Scores (and Standard Deviations) of Dependent Measures Within Each Ecological Niche

Ecological Niche	GPA	Self-Reliance	Psychol. Distress	Delinquency
WHITE,WORKING-CLASS,INTACT	2.61(.79)	3.01(.51)	2.61(.83)	1.22(.40)
WHITE,WORKING-CLASS,NONINTACT	2.51(.83)	3.03(.52)	2.67(.84)	1.24(.38)
WHITE,MIDDLE-CLASS,INTACT	3.07(.71)	3.15(.48)	2.57(.77)	1.16(.34)
WHITE,MIDDLE-CLASS,NONINTACT	2.80(.80)	3.16(.50)	2.68(.75)	1.18(.33)
BLACK,WORKING-CLASS,INTACT	2.59(.77)	3.18(.61)	2.13(.86)	1.12(.28)
BLACK,WORKING-CLASS,NONINTACT	2.47(.78)	3.15(.60)	2.41(.82)	1.16(.32)
BLACK,MIDDLE-CLASS,INTACT	2.57(.72)	3.10(.56)	2.38(.82)	1.19(.46)
BLACK,MIDDLE-CLASS,NONINTACT	2.48(.72)	3.12(.61)	2.44(.83)	1.19(.33)
HISPANIC,WORKING-CLASS,INTACT	2.47(.80)	2.95(.55)	2.42(.83)	1.25(.45)
HISPANIC,WORKING-CLASS,NONINTACT	2.28(.84)	2.96(.59)	2.44(.86)	1.20(.40)
HISPANIC,MIDDLE-CLASS,INTACT	2.62(.83)	3.00(.53)	2.32(.80)	1.20(.43)
HISPANIC,MIDDLE-CLASS,NONINTACT	2.50(.77)	3.00(.55)	2.57(.85)	1.26(.44)
ASIAN,WORKING-CLASS,INTACT	3.06(.78)	2.82(.50)	2.49(.83)	1.10(.19)
ASIAN,WORKING-CLASS,NONINTACT	3.02(.69)	2.81(.51)	2.39(.88)	1.10(.24)
ASIAN,MIDDLE-CLASS,INTACT	3.35(.68)	3.02(.48)	2.54(.76)	1.10(.27)
ASIAN,MIDDLE-CLASS,NONINTACT	3.12(.72)	3.00(.48)	2.51(.79)	1.12(.25)

Table 3

Mean Differences on Four Indicators of Adjustment among Adolescents from Authoritative versus Nonauthoritative Homes Across Sixteen "Ecological Niches" Defined by Ethnicity, Socioeconomic Status, and Family Structure

(N)	Ecological Niche	G.P.A.	Self-Reliance	Psychol. Distress	Delinquency
	White				
	Working Class				
	Intact				
(96)	AUTHORITATIVE	2.79**	3.14**	2.43*	1.11***
(463)	NONAUTHORITATIVE	2.57	2.97	2.65	1.24
	Effect Size (r)	.11	.13	.10	.12
	Nonintact				
(50)	AUTHORITATIVE	2.82**	3.12	2.55	1.14*
(386)	NONAUTHORITATIVE	2.47	3.02	2.68	1.25
	Effect Size (r)	.14	.12	.05	.09
	Middle Class				
	Intact				
(652)	AUTHORITATIVE	3.34***	3.27***	2.37***	1.07***
(1957)	NONAUTHORITATIVE	2.98	3.10	2.64	1.18
	Effect Size (r)	.22	.15	.15	.15

Table 3 (continued)

	Nonintact				
(224)	AUTHORITATIVE	3.14***	3.34***	2.50***	1.08***
(1045)	NONAUTHORITATIVE	2.73	3.11	2.72	1.20
	Effect Size (r)	.20	.18	.11	.15
	Black				
	Working Class				
	Intact				
(11)	AUTHORITATIVE	2.50	3.36	1.80	1.07
(71)	NONAUTHORITATIVE	2.60	3.15	2.18	1.13
	Effect Size (r)	-.04	.12	.14	.07
	Nonintact				
(25)	AUTHORITATIVE	2.78*	3.58***	2.26	1.05**
(180)	NONAUTHORITATIVE	2.42	3.07	2.43	1.79
	Effect Size (r)	.15	.32	.07	.15
	Middle Class				
	Intact				
(25)	AUTHORITATIVE	2.84*	3.35*	2.23	1.07**
(153)	NONAUTHORITATIVE	2.52	3.06	2.40	1.21
	Effect Size (r)	.15	.19	.07	.11

Table 3 (continued)

	Nonintact				
(50)	AUTHORITATIVE	2.61	3.35*	2.26*	1.17
(263)	NONAUTHORITATIVE	2.45	3.08	2.48	1.97
	Effect Size (r)	.08	.16	.10	.03
	Hispanic				
	Working Class				
	Intact				
(36)	AUTHORITATIVE	2.83**	3.26**	2.41	1.15*
(306)	NONAUTHORITATIVE	2.43	2.91	2.42	1.26
	Effect Size (r)	.16	.20	.00	.06
	Nonintact				
(25)	AUTHORITATIVE	2.50	3.19*	1.95**	1.13
(229)	NONAUTHORITATIVE	2.25	2.93	2.50	1.21
	Effect Size (r)	.09	.15	.20	.06
	Middle Class				
	Intact				
(32)	AUTHORITATIVE	2.88*	3.03	2.01*	1.17
(170)	NONAUTHORITATIVE	2.57	2.98	2.39	1.21
	Effect Size (r)	.13	.04	.18	.03

Table 3 (continued)

	Nonintact				
(22)	AUTHORITATIVE	2.75*	3.20*	2.34	1.14*
(149)	NONAUTHORITATIVE	2.46	2.95	2.60	1.28
	Effect Size (r)	.13	.17	.10	.12
	Asian				
	Working Class				
	Intact				
(12)	AUTHORITATIVE	3.21	3.02	2.09*	1.00***
(147)	NONAUTHORITATIVE	3.05	2.80	2.52	1.10
	Effect Size (r)	.05	.12	.14	.13
	Nonintact				
(4)	AUTHORITATIVE	3.00	3.13	2.28	1.00***
(62)	NONAUTHORITATIVE	3.02	2.79	2.39	1.11
	Effect Size (r)	-.01	.16	.03	.11
	Middle Class				
	Intact				
(93)	AUTHORITATIVE	3.51**	3.23***	2.35**	1.04***
(504)	NONAUTHORITATIVE	3.33	2.98	2.57	1.11
	Effect Size (r)	.10	.20	.10	.09

Table 3 (continued)

	Nonintact				
(18)	**AUTHORITATIVE**	3.22	2.92	2.30	1.01***
(148)	**NONAUTHORITATIVE**	3.10	2.97	2.53	1.13
	Effect Size (r)	.05	-.03	.09	.16

*p<.05, one-tailed

**p<.01, one-tailed

***p<.001, one-tailed